



WHY DID THE PALESTINIANS LEAVE, REVISITED

WALID KHALIDI

*The myth that the Palestinian exodus of 1948 was triggered by orders from the Arab leaders—a cornerstone of the official Israeli version of the 1948 war and intended to absolve it of responsibility for the refugee problem—dies hard. Thus, it continues to be deployed by apologists for Israel as a means of blaming the Palestinians for their own fate. Even Benny Morris, one of whose major conclusions in his 1986 *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* was to discredit the Israeli claim, cannot seem to let go of it completely. Thus, the conclusion of the substantially revised update of the book, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (2004), states that although the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) and the local National Committees made efforts to block the exodus of army-aged males, “at the same time, they actively promoted the depopulation of villages and towns. Many thousands of Arabs—women, children, and old people ... left, well before battle was joined, as a result of advice and orders from local Arab commanders and officials. Indeed, already months before the war the Arab states and the AHC had endorsed the removal of dependents from active and potential combat zones. There can be no exaggerating the importance of these early, Arab-initiated evacuations in the demoralization, and eventual exodus, of the remaining rural and urban populations” (pp. 589–90).*

Given the endurance of this central plank of the Israeli doctrine of 1948, JPS has decided to reprint for the first time a difficult-to-obtain article published in July 1959 by Walid Khalidi in a long-defunct periodical of the American University of Beirut (AUB), Middle East Forum. Entitled “Why Did the Palestinians Leave? An Examination of the Zionist Version of the Exodus of ‘48,” the article was based on a talk Professor Khalidi gave at AUB earlier that year. After tracing the origins and first appearance of the Zionist claim, the article, using AHC and Arab League archival material, Arab and Palestinian press releases and reports, Arab and Haganah radio broadcasts, and other Arab and Israeli sources exhaustively rebuts the claim through showing both what the

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broadcasts did not say and what they did say. JPS is reprinting the article as is.

While the July 1959 article debunks the myth using documents at the national or Arab level, a second article by Professor Khalidi published in December 1959, "The Fall of Haifa," touches on the Arab orders at the local level, an issue equally emphasized by Morris. The article, also published in the Middle East Forum, puts the exodus from the city after the Haganah offensive that led to its capture in April 1948 within the overall military context: Anglo-Zionist collusion, the balance of power, and so on. The article also deals directly with the orders and reproduces the texts of the eleven communiqués issued by the Haifa National Committee between the UN General Assembly partition decision (November 1947) and the fall of Haifa in April, all of which have bearing on the subject. JPS is reproducing these pages as an appendix but intends to publish "The Fall of Haifa" in its entirety at a later date.

A GENERAL THEME running through the Zionist account of the events between November 1947 and May 1948 is that orders were *broadcast* to the Arabs to leave the country in order to pave the way for entry of the regular Arab armies. I can find no significant trace of this allegation in Zionist sources in 1948, although one would expect it to be made then. On 23 April 1948, for example, Haganah Radio (i.e., the radio of the underground Zionist Army) gave a full account of the flight of the Arabs from Haifa. It was replying to accusations made by the Syrian delegate to the United Nations that atrocities were committed against the Arabs. The Haganah broadcast mentioned no order in its account of the Arab flight. In early May 1948, King Abdullah of Jordan accused the Zionist of expelling Arabs from their homes. On 4 May Haganah radio broadcast a reply, but it did not mention an Arab order urging the Arabs to leave. In August–September 1948, Shertok (the Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government of Israel) exchanged letters with Count Bernadotte over the question of the Arab refugees. Shertok disclaimed Israeli responsibility for the refugees, but no Arab evacuation order was mentioned. In August 1948 Weizmann concluded his autobiography bringing the story up to the establishment of Israel. He comments on the Arab exodus but mentions no order.

What is the explanation? It was only in 1949, when the Zionists realized that the problem of the Arab refugees was touching the conscience of the civilized world, that they decided to counter the damaging influence it was having on their cause. The story of the Arab evacuation order would hit two birds with one stone. It would absolve the Zionists from the responsibility for the refugees, and it would pin this

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responsibility on the Arabs themselves.

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If I were to place my finger on a single person who is responsible for systematizing the story (if a single person was responsible for doing so), I would probably place it on a certain American Zionist by the name of Dr. Joseph Schechtman, a leading member of the Zionist revisionist wing.

He is almost certainly responsible for the drafting of two mimeographed pamphlets which appeared in 1949 under the auspices of the Israel Information Center, New York, in which the evacuation order first makes an elaborate appearance. It was Schechtman's version which was incorporated in a memorandum submitted by the nineteen prominent Americans, including the poet Macleish and Niebuhr the theologian, to the United Nations. One interesting detail about this memorandum is that it quotes a Lebanese daily called *Sada al-Janub*. Now I have nothing against *Sada al-Janub*. It is a charming paper with a tiny circulation in the village of Marjeyoun in South Lebanon. But what I am still wondering at is that all these nineteen prominent Americans, including Macleish and Niebuhr, should have been such regular readers of *Sada al-Janub*.

To return to this order: Surely an order of such importance must be traceable somewhere? You do not ask the entire population of a country to leave without somebody debating the matter, without a decision somewhere being taken, without an impression somewhere being made. I have gone through the files of the press releases of the Arab League. These releases include every important pronouncement made by the League at the time. There is no trace of an order. The minutes of the meetings of the Arab League General Assembly—minutes which are limited to official circulation—have been unofficially examined. There is no trace in them of an order. Immediately after the end of the Palestine War an Iraqi Parliamentary Committee was formed to report directly to King Faisal on the causes of the Arab defeat. The archives of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense and Foreign Office were thrown open to this committee. The report, which has been privately examined, is full of mouth-watering scandals but there is no mention of an order. The Arab League Secretariat has already published the first volume containing the full texts of all the resolutions taken by the General Assembly and various committees of the League. The first volume covers the resolutions taken between 4 June 1945 and 27 March 1955. There is no mention of an order. The communiques made by the regular Arab armies, and by the irregular formations such as the Arab Liberation Army (ALA) as well as the communiques of the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine, are no secret. They have all been published. But they do not contain an order.

WHAT THE PRESS SAID

An examination was also made of newspapers. It was of course not possible to read all the newspapers that appear in the Arab world. A choice was made of three newspapers: the Egyptian *al-Ahram*, as the most reliable newspaper in the Arab world, the Lebanese *al-Hayat*, as the newspaper which concerned itself with Palestinian affairs more than any other

Arab newspaper outside Palestine, and *al-Difa'*, the leading Palestinian newspaper. It was thought that a matter of such moment as the order was bound to produce some comment, some editorial echo, however faint, whether favorable or adverse. But no such echo or comment was found in any of these papers.

What was found, however, were many interesting items which throw light on the matter. Only a few of these items will be given here. *Al-Hayat* on 30 April 1948 reported that the Central Committee for Palestine Refugees in Beirut had decided not to issue Palestine Arabs who were capable of bearing arms with residence permits, so that they could be sent back to Palestine. On 5 May *al-Hayat* published an official Lebanese communique ordering all Palestinian Arab males between the ages of eighteen and fifty to register with the police within forty-eight hours and threatening to apply the law against all those who entered the country without permission. The same issue reports that the Central Committee of the Refugees had decided to return the male refugees to Palestine and that the Lebanese government had approved this decision. On 6 May, *al-Hayat* reported a decision by the Syrian Committee for the Liberation of Palestine not to allow the entry into Syria of Palestinian Arabs of military age. On 7 May, *al-Hayat* reported a member of the Arab Higher Committee in Egypt describing the refugees who arrived at Port Said as "spies and pro-Zionist." On 15 May, *al-Hayat* carried the following heading: "Refugee Movement Stops" and below it the following item: "The movement of refugees into Lebanon has ceased entirely after the latest developments (i.e., entry of Arab armies) which have revived the morale of the people." On the other hand *al-Hayat's* issue of 16 May carries the text of a leaflet dropped from the air in Northern Galilee and signed "Haganah Commander in Galilee." The leaflet says among other things, "I have no wish to fight ordinary people who want to live in peace, but only the armies and forces which are preparing to invade Palestine. Therefore I declare in this communique that all people who do not want this war must leave together with their women and children in order to be safe. This is going to be a cruel war with no mercy or compassion. There is no reason why you should endanger yourselves."

The same story is substantially told in the two other papers. The Palestinian

al-Difa' of 22 April 1948, perhaps the gloomiest day in the Arab history of Palestine,* carries a statement by the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) which, far from urging the Arabs to leave, fervently asks them to be patient and to bear up and hold their ground. "The duty of the defence of the Holy Land rests upon us, the people of Palestine, first and foremost" the statement says.

URGED TO STAY

The story which emerges from these papers was confirmed by investigations made with the AHC in Cairo. On 8 March 1948, the AHC sent a circular memo to all the heads of Arab governments urging them not to grant entry permits into the Arab countries to Palestinians except to students, to people traveling for health reasons, or to delegates of the

Committee itself. The memo further requested the heads of Arab governments not to renew the residence permits of Palestinians already living in the Arab countries. Further, on 13 March the AHC cabled its office in Beirut to prevent the entry even of Palestinian women and

*The day Haifa fell.—*Ed.*

children refugees into Lebanon. (Photostat copies of these documents have appeared in the 1959 Special 15 May Palestine supplement to the Lebanese daily *al-Siyasah*.)

Another interesting document privately obtained is a leave-permit on the back of which instructions were hastily scribbled under the stress of battle conditions. It was sent from the village of Beit Surik by the Arab commander of the Jerusalem district to the headmen of Suba village. The date is 11 April, just after the massacre at Deir Yasin, no more than two miles from Suba as the crow flies. The headmen of Suba are urged to hold their ground and remain calm and to have no fear for their women and children. They are promised that reinforcements will soon come to their help. A photostat copy of this document has appeared in the *Siyasah* supplement already referred to.

This is all very well, you will say, but what about the broadcasts? How can you check on broadcasts? Fortunately, you can. At Caversham Park, near Reading in England, the monitoring station of the BBC listens to and records all broadcasts made in the various parts of the world. This record is kept for bona fide students in (among other places) the British Museum in London.

A day-to-day examination of the broadcasts from the Arab capitals and by secret Arab radio stations in 1948 fails to reveal a single reference, direct or indirect, to an order given to the Arabs of Palestine to leave. But, you will say, this is not enough. What is the *positive* evidence of these broadcasts?

Let us first take the AHC, which is the supreme national organization of the Palestine Arabs. Sharq al-Adna Station on 6 January reports that the AHC had decided to set up in the following month (i.e., February) a national administration in Palestine to include a National Assembly and an Executive Council. On 15 January Jerusalem radio reports an AHC spokesman as stating that elections for a constituent assembly would soon be held in Palestine.

ORDERED TO STAY

On 2 April, Sharq al-Adna announces that the AHC has drafted a list of supplies required in Palestine for three months following the British withdrawal and that the Arab governments have agreed that Palestine Arabs should have priority in supplies.

On 4 April, Damascus radio announces a communique' issued by the AHC to Arab government employees in Palestine urging them to continue at their posts and to take care of the furniture, property, and documents. The communique' further requests that the senior Arab employee should in each case be responsible for his department.

On 24 April, Damascus radio announces the decision of the AHC to transfer its headquarters to Palestine.* On 7 March, Damascus radio announces an AHC

*This is a reference to the contemplated return of the mufti, Haj Amin al-Husayni, to Palestine from his headquarters in Cairo. Husayni had fled Palestine to escape arrest by the British in 1937, during the 1936-39 Arab revolt, and had not set foot in the country since.—*Ed.*

order to department heads and officials in Palestine to carry on their work as usual. On 13 May, according to Sharq al-Adna, Col. Idrisi (the chief of police appointed by the AHC) orders all police forces in Palestine to be at their posts at 12:00 P.M. on 14 May to receive instructions. He further orders that all men aged eighteen to fifty must stay in the country, whether they are armed or unarmed. He appeals to the police in neighboring Arab countries to collaborate in the matter. On 15 May, the Arab News Agency reports the Arab radios as announcing three statements by AHC. The first urges members of the Supreme Muslim Council, the officials of the Muslim courts and waqfs, the sheikhs and servants in the mosques, to continue their duties. The second statement asks officials of the prison department to continue their duties. The third requests all Arab officials to remain at their posts. Surely this is an odd way of going about ordering the evacuation of the country?

But what about the Arab governments and the Arab League? Sharq al-Adna reports on 4 May a message sent to all the Palestine Arabs by King Abdullah on behalf of the Arab League. According to this broadcast, King Abdullah appealed to those who had left Palestine *to return*. Those who had remained in the Palestinian towns and villages were praised for their courage, heroism, and endurance.

More specifically, Beirut radio reported on 4 May that the Lebanese government had instructed all healthy and fit men aged eighteen to fifty among the Palestine refugees to register within forty-eight hours of 5 May. On 5 May, too, Cairo radio reported that the High Committee for Palestine Refugees had decided not to allow Palestinian men aged eighteen to fifty to take refuge on Egyptian territory. On 7 May, Beirut radio announced that the Syrian authorities had declared that they had received instructions to interview all Palestinian Arabs in Syria aged eighteen to fifty within forty-eight hours. Those not reporting themselves would be regarded as illegal residents of Syria.

But what about the irregular military forces? I am afraid they were rather specific in their tone. On 5 May, Damascus radio announced the following communique' from the headquarters of the ALA. "All those failing to participate in the defence of their villages will be liable to confiscation of their weapons. If a person deserts his village his house will be destroyed and his crops set on fire."

THE ZIONIST RADIOS

An interesting side light on the problem is what the Zionists' radios themselves said at the time. On 29 March 1948, Haganah radio announced that Arab personages in Jaffa had insisted that Syria and Lebanon be urged to implement their decision that no Arab should cross from Palestine unless he was a messenger of AHC. On 24 April, the Voice of the Jewish Defender announced that the AHC had imposed a

¹ large levy on Arab refugees moving from one district to another. On 26 April Haganah radio announced that the National Council in Jerusalem refused to give visas to anyone leaving Jerusalem for Trans-Jordan.

Another interesting aspect is the actual impact of the arrival of the regular Arab armies on the inhabitants. Far from ordering or causing them to leave, the Arab troops gave new hope to the Palestinian Arabs. I have already quoted *al-Hayat*, which reported the cessation of the refugee movement into Lebanon after the entry of the Arab armies. Other evidence, particularly about the cooperation between inhabitants and the Arab armies and the civil administration set up by the various Arab armies, may be easily found in the war memoirs by the various Arab officers that have already been published, particularly those of Nasser, Tell, Kawukji, Basbous, and Kamal al-Din Hussain. Another point to remember is that Arab public opinion in the Arab countries was positively hostile to the arrival of refugees, particularly male refugees. Thus the Egyptian weekly *Akhir Saa*, perhaps the most widely read periodical in the Arab world, in February was branding as traitors the Palestine Arabs who left their country. Quite apart from anything else, this was a factor that could not be ignored by the Arab governments.

ORDER OF EVENTS

But perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the problem is that of the sequence of events. The Zionists began their big offensive in the first week of April. By the end of April they had substantially broken the back of the Palestine Arabs and launched them on their mass exodus. It was as a reaction to this that the Arab governments decided to send their regular armies into Palestine. Thus the first conference of the Arab Chiefs of Staff was held only at the *end* of April, and the decision to send regular armies was not taken until early May. Indeed, some Arab governments (e.g., Egypt) had not decided to send their armies into Palestine by as late as 12 May. It was not the entry of the Arab armies that caused the exodus. It was the exodus that caused the entry of the Arab armies. Until the Zionists launched their offensive to cause this exodus, the Arab governments were still fundamentally thinking of diplomatic solutions. This is admitted by the Zionists themselves. Thus on 19 March, Haganah radio broadcast that the Arab governments had reached full agreement on a project, believed to be a *moderate* one, between the Arab plan submitted in London 1947 and another plan the details of which were indistinct. The moderate plan, according to Haganah radio, provided for the formation of a federal government in Palestine. On 31 March 1948, Haganah radio commented that the Arab states and their leaders were known to be more inclined to moderate solutions, such as a federal state or a state divided into provinces, and there was a "danger" (i.e., from the point of view of Palestine Arabs) that the views of the Arab governments might have more weight than those of the Palestine Arabs themselves. The extremism therefore came

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from the Palestine Arabs, not the Arab governments, and it
was not unreasonable to infer that it would have been
obvious even to the Palestine Arabs that they could not go
ahead with their extremism by evacuating the country.

THE REAL CAUSES

The Zionist offensive which caused the Arab exodus was a mixture of psychological and terroristic warfare. The evidence for the latter from the Zionist sources themselves (i.e., the writings of Koestler, Kimche, Sacher, Pearlman, Levin, and Begin¹

²) is overwhelming but does not strictly speaking concern us here. The psychological warfare was of two types: a *general* type, which aimed gradually at undermining confidence and morale in the community at large, and a concentrated type of what may be called the blitz variety, which usually preceded an all-out operation to capture a particular town or locality. The general psychological offensive emphasized Arab political dissension, the unpreparedness of Arab armies, the number of Arab casualties and, toward the end of April, began to give details of Haganah operations against Arab towns and villages. But more specific themes were also developed. The Arabs were warned of the consequences of so-called reprisal operations. On 14 March, Haganah radio announced: "We will answer killing with killing, destruction with destruction. We regret having to undertake reprisal raids in which innocent people may have to pay the price for the crimes of others, but we have warned you." A favorite theme was the spread of disease on the Arab side. On 18 February, Haganah radio announced that smallpox had been reported in Jaffa as a result of the arrival of Syrians and Iraqis. On the same day Haganah radio announced that among Arabs killed and wounded after an engagement, several were found suffering from "contagious diseases." On 27 March, the Free Hebrew Station broadcast the following: "Do you know that it is a sacred duty for you to hasten to inoculate yourselves and families against cholera, typhus, and similar diseases as it is expected that such diseases will break out heavily in April and May among Arabs in urban agglomerations?" An interesting line was to give the impression of extensive Arab collaboration with the Zionists. Thus Haganah radio, for example, on 27 March broadcast cryptic messages such as: "To No. 1 Tulkarm, we maintain in principle our conditions." And "Come and meet No. 8 for instructions." An ominous broadcast was one on 11 March by Haganah radio announcing that Arabs had used ambulances for purposes other than that for which they were intended. The Arabs were warned. A broadcast on March, by Haganah, warned Arabs that four British nurses who had volunteered to work in an Arab hospital were spies.

As to what I called the blitz variety, here is a description by Levin. "Nearby

(in Jerusalem) a loud speaker burst out in Arab [*sic*]. Haganah broadcasting to civilian Arabs urging them to leave the district before 5:15 A.M. "Take pity on you wives and children and get out of this blood bath Get out by the Jericho

road, that is still open to you. If you stay you invite disaster." The date in Levin's diary was 15 May. Another example is available in Koestler's *Promise and Fulfillment*. According to Koestler, on the eve of the attack on Haifa, Haganah used not only its radio station but also loudspeaker vans, which blared their sinister news from the vicinity of Arab *suqs*. They warned the Arab population to keep clear of the billets of foreign mercenaries who had infiltrated into the

town; they warned them to send their women and children away before new contingents of savage Iraqis arrived, promised them safe conducts and escort to Arab territory, and hinted at terrible consequences if their warnings were disregarded.

When all is said and done, it is as well to remember that wide as is the currency of the Zionist version of these events, some very important authorities, perhaps the most significant authorities, do not subscribe to it. The Palestine Commission, which was appointed by the UN General Assembly to implement the partition resolution, sent several reports to the UN describing the difficulties confronting it in Palestine. The last report was 10 April. Nowhere does the alleged Arab evacuation order appear in these reports. Count Bernadotte, the United Nations mediator, incorporated an exhaustive section on the refugees in his last report to the UN.* But when discussing the origins of the refugees he does not mention an order. Several authors on Palestine (some of whom are not over-enthusiastically pro-Arab) either sniff at the order or do not mention it at all. These are Glubb, Graves, Koestler and O'Ballance, Hurewitz and Hollingworth, Wilson, Kirk, and MacDonald. To sum up:

- In spite of all the "evidence" that the Zionists have produced, they still have never indicated the following: (1) The exact text or even paraphrase of the alleged evacuation order. (2) The identity of the Arab radio station which allegedly broadcast these orders. (3) The day and time the broadcasts are supposed to have been made.
- The reason for this is quite simple. There were no evacuation orders.
- The Zionists themselves admitted this before they had thought of inventing the order version.
- Such broadcasts as were made urging the Arabs to leave were part of the Zionists psychological offensive against the Palestine Arabs.

Perhaps the best epitaph one can find for the Zionist myth of an Arab evacuation order is the following passage from Jon Kimche's book *The Seven Fallen Pillars* (p. 178). (This was in the days before Kimche became editor of the *Jewish Observer*, the official organ of the Zionist Federation of Britain.) Kimche wrote: "As a newspaperman, and as an editor, I came to the conclusion that no information emanating from Zionist headquarters should be accepted before it had received independent confirmation." I entirely agree.

*The report was published on 20 September 1948, three days after Bernadotte was assassinated on 17 September 1948 by the "Stern Gang" (*Lohmei Herut Yisrael*; Freedom Fighters of Israel), a terror group one of whose three operational

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commanders was Yitzhak Shamir.—*Ed.*

APPENDIX (FROM "THE FALL OF HAIFA," MIDDLE EAST FORUM, DECEMBER 1959)

The Zionists, for some inexplicable reason, pick on Haifa to support their myth that the Arab authorities had an organized plan for the evacuation of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine as a preliminary to the invasion of the country by the regular Arab armies. The directives to the people of Palestine of the

Arab League, the Palestine Arab Higher Committee, and the Arab Liberation Army were referred to in this writer's article mentioned above [i.e., "Why did the Palestinians Leave?"]. These directives applied to Haifa as much as they did to any other part of Palestine. Indeed, if anything, the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) erred on the side of excessive zeal in opposing evacuation of whatever kind.

It is normal in all countries in time of war to evacuate women and children from endangered zones, particularly if the enemy's *land* forces are near at hand. But even this simple precaution the AHC would not countenance. This is clear from the copy of the telegram sent by Hajj Amin al-Husseini, president of the AHC, to the AHC representative in Beirut on 3 March 1948. The telegram, which is initialed in its draft form by Hajj Amin himself, reads: "The emigration of *children* and others from Palestine to Syria and Beirut is detrimental to our interests. Contact the proper authorities in Damascus and Beirut to prevent it and inform us of the result."

But let us look more closely at the attitude of the Haifa National Committee. The Committee issued twelve communiques between its formation and the fall of the city. These communiques were its only public pronouncements and embodied all the orders and warnings it ever made to the Arabs of Haifa. The writer has been able to locate all twelve communiques. The following are their contents:

Communique' 1 (6 December 1947). The Committee announces its formation and asks for the cooperation of all the Arabs. Every Arab man and woman must be patient and display self-control. He must not listen to rumors. *He must stay at his post or at his work whenever an incident occurs.* This is both to insure his or her safety and to avoid confusion. The telephone numbers of the Committee are 3540 and 2167. All incidents must be directly reported. Finally, no Arab must attack a fellow Arab, old enmities must be buried, large gatherings in the streets, open spaces, or cafes are not allowed, children must not play in groups, profiteering and lawless acts will be severely punished.

Communique' 2 (10 December 1947). The communique' categorically forbids public gatherings and individual acts and attacks (against the Zionists). Children must be kept either at school or at home and must not be allowed to play in groups on the streets.

Communique' 3 (12 December 1947). The communique'

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starts with the words "Beware of Fifth Columnists" and goes on to say that there are some "vile and criminal" individuals who are disseminating false reports and rumors among the public "which are designed to help the enemy by spreading panic

and confusion." This Fifth Column *"has actually succeeded in its first round in influencing some people to leave their properties and houses which have become an easy prey to the enemy who has seized and occupied them."** The communique ends by urging all Arabs to oppose confusion and defeatism.

Communique' 4 (14 December 1947). The communique' announces the formation of local subcommittees, which are to be in charge of security matters in all quarters. *"These subcommittees are empowered to prevent people from abandoning their houses, particularly along the borders of the mixed Arab-Jewish areas."* The Committee warns against public gatherings and calls upon tradesmen and shopkeepers to return to work.

Communique' 5 (16 December 1947). This communique' comprises twenty-five specific requests which are largely a repetition of what had been said earlier viz. warnings against public gatherings, instructions about how to get in touch with the committee in case of need, etc. Request no. 11 is: *"Carry on work as usual and do not neglect to open your shops and offices."* Request no. 13 reads: *"Do not give in to warnings and threats and never desert your houses."*

Communique' 6 (27 December 1947). This refers to recent victims of Zionist attacks and calls upon Arabs not to give in to the temptations of retaliation. It asks for closer cooperation with the local committees and states that it will be very strict with those who, by taking the law into their own hands, merely encourage brigandage. The Committee urges the public *"each to apply himself to his work, the tradesman to open his shop, the laborer to carry on his work as usual."*

Communique' 7 (29 December 1947, after the Zionists had rolled down a barrel bomb from Hadar Ha Carmel). The Committee prays for the victims of the barrel bomb and asks that all firing (begun after the explosion) should cease "in the national interest" and that the public should resume work as usual.

Communique' 8 (8 January 1948). This communique' is about rationing and profiteering.

Communique' 9 (9 January 1948). This is addressed to "employees in the oil companies, (British) army camps and railways, to all Arab workers in Haifa and its district and to Arab members of the police force and other Arab Government officials."

The following is the text of the communique': "The National Committee has undertaken to help you in all that pertains to your security and to safeguard your interests, both present and future. The Committee believes that in no circumstances must you give up your jobs or delay in the performance of your duties. Members of the police are particularly requested to remain at their posts and are warned against attempting to abscond with their weapons. *All must stay at their work. Those who leave their work not*

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*only harm themselves by losing their means of livelihood, but
they also harm their nation, for they pave the way to the
employment of foreigners in their places.*

*These and the following italics are those of the author.—Ed.

The Committee believes that the country's resources must remain in our hands. But this can only be insured if the workers in the oil companies and army camps and the Government employees and members of the police force *all remain at their posts*. This is their national duty and they must be fully aware of it. The Committee would like to assure you that it is watching over your interests and is ready to give you all the necessary protection."

Communique' 10 (1 March 1948). This is addressed directly to the Arab lawless elements. It announces the formation of a special security committee and special military and civilian tribunals to deal with offenders.

Communique' 11 (18 March 1948). This announces the death in action the day before of Lieutenant Huneiti, the garrison commander, and thirteen of his comrades and gives particulars of the time and place of the burial ceremonies.

Communique' 12 (20 March 1948). This triumphantly announces the news of the American reversal of attitude on partition. "The Americans and their accomplices in support of partition (with the exception of Communist Russia) are in full retreat." The Committee, however, warns that all is not over yet. "We must persevere in our work and beware of surprise attacks and treachery. We must hold firm to our positions." The communique', the last official Arab pronouncement ever to be made in Haifa before its fall, ends as follows: "The Committee would like to draw attention to the following points: (a) What has so far been achieved is only a preliminary victory. (b) We must avoid all clashes with the security forces and the army (i.e., the British) in the next phase. We must likewise continue our policy of not attacking Government departments and installations. (c) We must avoid all individual acts. (d) *Everyone must maintain his position and carry out all instructions and orders given to him*. Love live Palestine, free, Arab, united, independent. Long live the memory of our martyrs."

NOTES

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